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ABSTRACT

The goal of this practicum was to increase the opportunities of secondary African American and Latino students to critically read, think, and write about literature that was diverse both in terms of culture and gender. Although the students (61 students in grade 11) had completed 2 years of high school English classes, the overwhelming majority of them said they had been given virtually no opportunity to read literary works by culturally diverse authors or by authors of different genders; further, they had not read works that address subjects concerning culture or gender. During the 9-month practicum period, strategies were effectively employed that enhanced the students' abilities to critically read, think, and write about literature and life. By using teaching styles and activities that were congruous with the students cultural learning style, a nurturing, supportive classroom environment was created that promoted students' interests in improving their integrated skills and desire for academic success. The outcomes of the practicum were positive. The students were given several opportunities to read literary works by African American, Latino/Mexican, and female authors. In so doing, the students were able to construct their own meaning from the literature while realizing that through literary works they may discover their connectedness to each other, to the universe, and to the necessity for success in school and in life. (Contains 5 tables of data and 37 references. Appendixes include entrance and exit reading assessment questionnaires and year-end assessment essay questions.) (Author/TB)

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ED 387 802

Increasing Secondary African American and Latino Students' Opportunities to Critically Read, Think, and Write about Cultural and Gender Diverse Literature

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by

Alice Shipman-Campbell

Los Angeles, Cluster 55

A Practicum II Report Presented to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Nova Southeastern University

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ABSTRACT

Increasing Secondary African American and Latino Students' Opportunities to Critically Read, Think, and Write about Cultural and Gender Diverse Literature.
Shipman-Campbell, Alice, 1995: Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. African American Reading Motivation/Latino and Mexican American Reading Motivation/Multicultural Literature/Teaching and Learning Style/Variance/Writing about African American Literature/Gender Equity in Literature/ Cultural and Gender Equity in Secondary Curriculum/Sheltered English Strategies

The goal of this practicum was to increase the opportunities of secondary African American and Latino students to critically read, think, and write about cultural and gender diverse literature. Although the students had completed two years of high school English classes, the overwhelming majority of them admitted they had been given either one or no opportunity to read literary works by or about cultural and gender diverse authors and/or subjects in that two year time period.

During the nine month practicum period, the writer effectively employed strategies that enhanced the students' ability to critically read, think, and write about literature and life. By using teaching styles and activities that were congruous to the students' cultural learning style, the writer was able to create a nurturing, supportive classroom environment that promoted their interest in improving their integrated skills and desire for academic success.

The outcomes of the practicum were positive. The students were given several opportunities to read literary works written by African American, Latino/Mexican, and female authors. In so doing, the students were able to construct their own meaning from the literature while realizing that through literary works they may discover their connectedness to each other, to the universe, and to the necessity for success in school and in life.

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July 6, 1995 Alice Shipman Campbell

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Work Setting and Community

The writer is employed by a small (thirteen schools) district located near one of the largest metropolitan cities and one of the top five populated school districts in the country. The community has had an upsurge in population within the last seven years that has impacted the schools tremendously. As a result of this upsurge, the majority of this district's schools have adopted the multiple track "year round" school system. The writer's work setting is therefore inclusive of a non-traditional school year calendar where students and staff are divided and placed on three different tracks. This tri-track system was mandated, against the community's wishes, by the State Department of Education as a means of ameliorating the excessively over-crowded student population in the schools. Because neither the total student or staff population attends school simultaneously except for a few months at a time, in this writer's opinion, neither factions have been able to adjust and implement a workable curricular design that meets the needs of the majority of the students or staff. This tri-division has exacerbated numerous problems.

One of the most pronounced problems is the inability of the staff to collaborate as a whole unit to discuss and solve the many problems that innately present themselves such as purchasing and sharing textbooks, supplies, equipment and teacher shortages. With the excessive cutbacks in the school's budget by the state, it is virtually impossible to equitably spread human and material resources across three tracks in order to service students. Thus, debates, arguments, and protests about equity become commonplace in this writer's work setting.

The families in the community are primarily lower socio-economic workers earning an average of less than $15,000.00 per year. Because of the low income level of the parents, many of the students in the target group work part or full time to augment

their family's income. The average adult educational level is less than ninth grade. The adult community is largely comprised of Spanish-dominant speakers whose children speak English as a second language. The second largest population in the community and at the writer's work setting is African American. Both the community and the work setting are rich with the presence of Latino and African American cultures.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The work setting for the writer is at the lone high school in the district. The writer has been employed at this school site for twenty-one years as a teacher in the English Department. Although the writer's primary responsibilities have been in the classroom, the challenges of being department chairperson, curriculum revision committee chair, mentor teacher, gifted and talented coordinator, accreditation self-study coordinator, union representative as well as teacher-sponsor of three clubs and ten classes over the past twenty-one years have added to this writer's professional and personal depth. Having completed a Master of Arts degree in education several years ago, the writer is currently pursuing a doctorate degree in the same subject with a specialization in curriculum and instruction (School Management and Instructional Leadership).

The writer's role in this problem-solving activity will be to enhance the students' opportunities and motivation to read, think, and write critically by infusing culturally and gender diverse literature into the curricula.

Sixty-one students currently enrolled in this writer's eleventh grade English classes will be involved in this practicum. It is significant to note that 35 out of 61 students are of Latin descent. They or their parents are either from Mexico, Central or South America. Also in significant number are the 25 of 61 students who are of African descent. They or their parents are from the African diaspora which includes the African continent, the Americas, West Indies, and the Caribbean Islands. One of 61 students is of European

descent. It must be noted here additionally that of the 61 students, 35 are female and 26 are male. All of these numerics are germane to the writer's problem-solving activity. (See Table 1)

Table 1

Ethnic and Gender Data

Ethnicity	African American	Latino/Mexican	White	Other
Female	12	22	1	0
Male	13	13	0	0

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The skills of reading, thinking, and writing critically about literature have proven to be complex for most readers. Complicating these skills with the adolescent stages of human development makes reading literature even more challenging. Over the past five years, this writer has observed students struggling to construct their own meaning and find the nuances of implicit and explicit interpretations of literature presented to them. Although selections of literature were chosen that had high interest to the writer's previous students (who were all white just fifteen years ago) to book publishers and literary critics, many of the present day students more often than not exhibit patronizing attitudes and behavior about the literature. To begin to confront this nonchalant, patronizing student behavior and attitude, the writer administered a questionnaire to the students. The questionnaire revealed that the majority of the students expressed a valid concern that they have not seen their images or their life circumstances reflected substantially in the literature presented to them thus far in high school. The data collected from this same questionnaire further unleashed some other disconcerting revelations that follow.

Problem Documentation

After informally interviewing the students' former English teachers from their ninth and tenth grade years, this writer found that of five teachers from the students' past two years, three presented a poem and a short story during one school year written by or having major characters, images, or circumstances that mirrored the students in this practicum who are primarily Latino and African American. The other two teachers did

not include any literature written by or about Latino or African American characters or circumstances at all.

In addition to this information noted during informal interviews with students and teachers, the writer's questionnaire that was administered to the students revealed:

- 36 of 61 students said they hate reading literature.
- 54 of 61 students have read one book or less over the past two years.
- 53 of 61 students responded the literature did not include African American or Latino American authors and/or African American of Latino positive characters, circumstances, or culture and if so, marginally or stereotypically.
- 52 of 61 students responded the literature did not include positive, strong female characters and if so, marginally or stereotypically.

Causative Analysis

After analyzing the data, interviewing students' former English teachers, and reflecting back over the past five years as a teacher of classic and contemporary literature, the writer surmised that concrete causes exist as to why the students are not given more opportunities to read, think, and write about cultural and gender diverse literature. The writer focused on eleven of the most prevalent causes.

One, many teachers may be unwilling to balance the existing curriculum with the infusion of diverse literature. Two, because of many teachers' unwillingness or hesitancy to try new teaching strategies that are congruent to students' learning styles, teachers may deny students' opportunities to read diverse literature. Three, to the detriment of all, many teachers may have accumulated negative beliefs and low expectations of Latino and African American students which may result in fewer opportunities assigned by teachers for students to read diversified or any type of literature. Four, many teachers may not afford students with diverse literature reading because they (teachers) lack particular

teaching skills necessary to meaningfully address issues that may arise in the literature; Five, they may have poor quality or quantity of available instructional materials; Six, they may have inadequate preparation time or subject familiarity; Seven, the administrators may not offer support to teachers who have the courage and will to add equity into the curriculum.

Eight, students may also contribute to their own denial of diverse reading opportunities. Strong peer pressure is experienced by students when their friends place negative labels on Latino and African American students such as "nerd", "wanna be", or "acting white" if they appear to like school or desire to achieve. Nine, still other students may believe their life or/circumstance is hopeless. This may be reinforced by the denial or minimization of opportunities to read diverse literature that exemplifies strong, positive characters resembling their own; Ten, students' low self-esteem coupled with the fear of failure and/or success hinders their willingness and opportunities to read.

Eleven, not to be overlooked is the fact that neither the parents nor students are allowed to suggest reading material for inclusion into the departmental curriculum.

In summary, marginal or no curricular inclusion; discongruent teaching and learning strategies; hopelessness; negative peer group influence; low self-esteem accompanied by the fear of failure and/or success; and low teacher expectations, and negative attitude about the Latino and African American community in general; insufficient or absence of training and preparation time for diversity teaching; poor quality or quantity of diverse materials available; administrative nonsupport of teachers who include diverse literature; plus parents and students not being allowed to suggest reading materials that may include diverse literature are some of the causes students in communities such as where this writer's work site is located are given few or no opportunities to read, think, and write about diverse literature.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Other professionals have written about the existence of this practicum problem as revealed in a literature review by the writer.

Kunjufu (1988) emphatically affirms that many students, particularly African American students of which his research is centered, are not motivated to learn because they fear being alienated by their peers. The pressure placed on many African American youth by their peers to remain in "low-tracked" courses and to take non-demanding teachers he believes paves the way for these youth to devalue school achievement. Oftentimes the African American youth is labeled as "acting white" which to a large extent becomes the consequence of academic achievement. To circumvent this negative label, some students opt to remain unchallenged in order to maintain acceptance by their peer group that is valued highly by the adolescent student. Harter (1990) states in her research on adolescent identity development that the self esteem of non-white students may be predicated on diverse attributes. White students, because of cultural differences, value some of the same, but often value different things. While many of these things are the same for non-white students, many nonschool areas in which non-white students feel they excel and over which they have control become more important than academic achievement. Examples of areas the non-white student believes she can excel and thus is more highly valued are athletic prowess, musical talent, acting ability and sexuality. Harter notes that self esteem and academic achievement have variances according to geographical regions. She found African American students in racially segregated schools in the South have higher self esteem than those in the North. This suggests that in segregated settings more cultural and psychological cohesion is provided by community and family, as well as by the shared value of school administrators and parents. The writer's interest was further piqued by Harter's research with the assumption that students

who are in the majority by virtue of race or other significant factors, often generate feelings of inferiority or displacement in the minority population student which in turn can be another cause of low self esteem that may foster self-denial of opportunities and low academic achievement. In essence, Harter establishes that adolescents value what their peers think about them to a greater extent than what is socially and academically acceptable to parents or teachers, which is another cause of motivation absence that translates into limited opportunities for academic success.

Black and Hispanic youth are like all humans; they require acceptance. Very often, their needs are satisfied in peer groups where rapport is established and acceptance bonds are made and nurtured. The way many Black youth talk, walk, dress, dance, play competitive sports, rap, and even "play the dozens" with one another reflects the extent to which they have internalized their self-worth and "place" within their peer group subculture. When peers provide appreciation and approval, they often become the primary support unit (Kuykendall, 1992).

Kuykendall also posits that the Black or Hispanic child often feels hopeless. With excess hopelessness that they often feel as a response to a non-responsive educational system, their hopelessness many turn into rage. With hope there is reason to look to tomorrow. Without hope, life is meaningless. Without hope, there is greater propensity for negative behavior (Kuykendall). In many cases, the only hope for these students is sought by them through their teachers. Resultant of this hopelessness, many African American and Latino students feel entrapped in a system that offers them minimal or nonexistent opportunities for legitimate upward mobility. Because these students do not see opportunities for change in their future societal roles, social status, or income, they very often stop seeking academic success or legitimate acceptable work after leaving school and instead seek survival by way of unacceptable deviant work such as larceny, murder, drug sales, robbery, and burglary. Kunjufu reaffirms this theory of hopelessness

especially where the African American student is concerned. Because of their own limited future employment opportunities and the preferential treatment of whites in the job market, these students become doubtful about the future and the value of schooling.

Legin-Bucell (1990) continues that a strong correlation exists between students with low self esteem and low grades. This self esteem factor she found to be critical especially when students have the same amount of intelligence (as indicated by standard tests). However, the child with high self esteem more often than not makes better use of her abilities while increasing opportunities to read and succeed academically. Low self esteem may also be the effect of the fear of failure or success. A person with a low self image, she posits, is likely to use these fears as a excuse for not persevering or better yet, not trying at all to achieve academically.

Teel, Parecki, and Covington's (1992) research findings indicate that most educators are not responsive to cultural diversity and therefore respond negatively to African American students' learning styles. Their research expands the idea that white students have similar and dissimilar learning styles in comparison to Latino and African American students. The research of Hale-Benson (1982) also solidifies this position noting the importance of educators to understand and embrace the role that culture plays in shaping learning styles. Culture shapes cognitive development, children's approach to academic tasks, and their behavior in traditional academic settings (Hale-Benson). She suggests that many African American youth approach learning incongruously from the analytical style favored in most school settings. Instead, these youth are more comfortable with relational, field dependent/sensitive, people-oriented approaches to learning. Hale-Benson and Kuykendall stress, however, that in no way should the assumption be made that all African American and Latino students use the same learning style.

Kuykendall's research defines people-oriented learning as a style derived from African heritage. She reveals that African American youth may have difficulty (more so

than white students) in classroom settings where learning hinges on the use of objects such as programmed instruction, learning kits, listening stations, educational hardware and other artificial means. The differences in culture means that these youth have higher academic success when teachers employ intensive personal interaction establishing rapport, affection, and nonverbal support in addition to verbal support.

Banks; Hale-Benson; Darder; Legin-Bucell; and Kuykendall all submit in their research that a high percentage of Latino and African American students tend to be cognizant of the social and personal relevance of their learning experience which is often termed a "field-dependent" or "field-sensitive" learner. These students value materials and concepts that are related to their own experience and are not isolated or abstract. In other words, the methods, strategies, and materials used in a classroom must be congruous to their culture and/or life's circumstances and situations. These students also value the import and employ of cooperative and collaborative exchanges in the learning environment including lively group discussion, group projects, and telling of stories about personal experiences. Field independent learners enjoy classroom strategies and environments that are teacher-centered and often individual, competitive oriented (See Table 1).

Further research on learning styles support the idea that for African American and Latino students, active learning as opposed to passive learning (drill and practice exercises, for example) is more effective. Personal compliments, positive reinforcement, praise, enthusiasm, and even hugs are very effective in the classroom where Latino and African American students predominate (Kuykendall).

Another cause of low student motivation according to researchers is the academic tracking and ability grouping of African and Latino students and thus fewer opportunities to read cultural and gender specific literature. This creates an educational caste system that engenders downward, not upward mobility of these students. Tracking and ability grouping subliminally tells Latino and African American students that they are not worthy

Table 2

LEARNING PREFERENCES

(Adopted from Howard, Bessie C. (1987). Learning to Persist/Persisting to Learn. Mid-Atlantic Center for Race Equity, The American University: Washington, D. C.)

Field Independent Students	Field Dependent Students
• Independent projects, working alone	• Group projects, sharing, discussions
• Hypothesis-testing approaches	• Personal examples, anecdotes
• Solving problems	• Relating learning to own experiences
• A focus on details, moving from specific to general (phonics, structured rules in spelling and mathematics)	• A focus on the big picture, an overview moving from the general to the specific (whole-word, language experiences, reasons for rules)
• Clear grading criteria with specific feedback	• Praise, assurance, working to please others, frequent interaction with teachers
• Teacher-centered environment	• Student-centered environment

or capable of having opportunities requiring a broader knowledge base and range (Oakes 1985). Therefore, opportunities for enduring success in life must be limited they may believe. The negative messages conveyed through the strategy of tracking and ability grouping must be abolished by educators if true academic and life-long success are goals of schools. It is clear that neither the teacher nor the student benefits from this grouping strategy. Documentation exists revealing the over-representation of Latino and African American students in lower-ability groups as well as vocational and general tracks.

Oakes (1985) viewed tracking as a primary reason for what she terms "mediocre schooling" and lists the consequences of such practices:

- initial differences among students are exaggerated rather than accommodated.
- school officials accept the achievement of a few at the expense of the majority.
- most students have mediocre classroom experiences due to curricular and instructional inequalities.
- barriers develop to prevent success for Latino and African Americans .

It is also postulated that heterogeneous grouping and cooperative learning strategies employed with students of these two cultures who nonetheless have different interests, backgrounds, cultures, and plans for the future results in high achievement for students at all previous "tracking" levels (Hale-Benson, 1982). This tracking system creates an unequitable educational setting. Low teacher expectations are often a result of this tracking system.

Darder (1991) found that where children are perceived as intelligent, motivated, and articulate which is most often found to be the case in students placed on higher level academic tracks, the children fulfill the expectation of success. By contrast, children who are perceived as unintelligent, unmotivated, and inarticulate which is most often found to be the case in Latino and African American students placed on lower level non-academic tracks, these children very often fulfill the expectation of failure. For this reason, schools must not ignore the effects of tracking and ability grouping. She further assessed the impact of tracking on teacher expectations of students and found the development of teacher expectations are rooted in personal experiences related to race, peer socialization, class, appearance, behavior, and test performance. It is cautioned in this research that culturally biased tests should not be used for placement of Latino and African American students. While some standardized testing is required, most assessment should be criterion-referenced based on what a student has actually been taught in a classroom. This

type of test, along with other types such as oral exams, projects, products, and group assignments provide more accurate mastery of specific material.

Baker (1983) states that most school systems do not value multicultural approaches to curriculum implementation. If this trend continues, she contends that students will not learn to value living harmoniously with people who are unlike them. Marginalizing other cultures she asserts is counterproductive.

Students enjoy greater success in schools when the curricula engages them through literature and other curricular choices reflective of the young adult experience from diverse cultural perspectives. This definitely includes their own culture curricula that is inclusive instead of exclusive. It fosters pride and confidence in students while simultaneously promotes student success in school and ultimately in life (Hale-Benson, 1982; Hilliard, 1980; Kunjufu, 1988; Banks, 1993; Ramirez & Casteneda, 1974). Although their research is inconclusive as to whether the inclusion of cultural curricula augments actual achievement, demonstrations of pride and discipline shown by these students which is resultant from such programs is an indication that these students want to be part of the learning experience. Schools can increase opportunities to learn and enhance the students' motivation to do so when they provide a climate where cultural diversity is celebrated, not just in what is taught, but also in how it is taught. The entire culture of the school must be expanded to accept and celebrate student differences (Kuykendall).

Finally, it is also important that schools recognize the detriment to which female students have suffered for the same causes that African American and Latino students have suffered in the educational system. In both instances, the curriculum has presented a distinct system of exclusion. Female students for years have been victims of gender exclusion. As scholars look more closely at the complex patterns of women's lives, they see the need for a pluralistic conceptualization of women (Banks, 1993). In schools that

are populated primarily by Latino and African Americans, it is not uncommon to find a curriculum centered around white authors and characters and perhaps one or two African American or Latino authors and characters. However, it is not uncommon to find that white women in general and women of color specifically are virtually non-existent in the curricula. Research by Banks suggests that by beginning with studying women of color, the curriculum then will evolve to be truly pluralistic. Thornton (1994) espouses to this weighty issue of gender equity importance. He believes all schools must make sure that female roles occupy a larger place in the curriculum.

In summary, American educators have been remiss in recognizing the value and significance that culture and gender play in Latino and African American students motivation when given opportunities to read. Educators and researchers must address the issues of cultural diversity and gender equity in the curricula without hesitation. According to the researchers included in this practicum, neglecting to implement a curriculum of inclusion will continue to foster generations of enraged students who believe their lives are hopeless which may manifest itself into an explosive lifestyle figuratively and literally speaking.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOME AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The goal of this writer is to increase secondary Latino and African American students' opportunities to read, think, and write critically about cultural and gender diverse literature.

Expected Outcomes

Students will make personal connections between their own lives and the culture and gender of others through universal themes in literary works that connect us as human beings. By the end of the implementation period at least:

Outcome One - 31 of 61 students in the target group will report on a questionnaire that they enjoy reading.

Outcome Two - 31 of 61 students will report on a questionnaire that they have read more than one literary work that included non-stereotypical Latino, African American, or female characters.

Outcome Three - 31 of 61 students will report on a questionnaire that they have appreciation or respect for another culture or race as a result of the literature studied this year.

Outcome Four - 31 of 61 students will report on a questionnaire that they have appreciation or respect for literature written by African American, Latino, or female authors.

Outcome Five - 31 of 61 students will report on a questionnaire that they identified with characters and/or the character's circumstances in the literature that were similar to their own.

Outcome Six - 55 of 61 students will develop an authentic assessment model project to display or present in the classroom.

Measurement of Outcomes

After the implementation period, the writer will administer a written questionnaire of which the students' responses will be used to measure the expected outcomes. Outcome Six will be measured by the writer after assessing the students' authentic assessment model such as those that follow:

Table 3

Authentic Assessment Models	
a. compile samples of exemplary work in a portfolio	(1 portfolio)
b. write and tell a story to the class	(1 story)
c. compile a student journal/metacognitive literature log	(10 entries)
d. write and/or stage a one-act play	(1 play)
e. design and illustrate a sketch book of drawings	(10 sketches)
f. write a book of poems	(6 poems)
g. write, sing, or perform (with instrument) an original song	(1)
h. seek permission from the teacher to deviate from the above list and design an original assessment model	(TBA)

It will be imperative that the writer monitors the students' reading and writing progress. This may be done by simple one-on-one conferences, group conferences, or by reviewing the students' journal. Students will be required to keep a weekly journal to take notes on unexpected or points of interest that may be used anecdotally at the end of the product assessment.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The problem was that the students in this writer's English classes who are majority Latino, African American, and female had little or no opportunities to read and see their images or their life circumstances reflected substantially in the literature presented to them in high school prior to enrolling in the writer's junior honors English classes. As a partial result, they were not motivated to read literature.

This writer realized almost immediately that many of these students found story telling and story listening to be captivating. This was determined by the writer during the first week of school when a children's story was read to them that is based on negotiations that took place in the United States during the 1850's between a Native American, Chief Seattle and white settlers. The negotiations speech was delivered in his native tongue during one of the many negotiations between the two groups. This speech has since become the foundational philosophy of many ecological movements world wide today. His speech, put into story form by Susan Jeffers (1991) was read to the writer's classes and is the basis of which Brother Eagle, Sister Sky is drawn.

As the writer orally read to the classes, their faces had looks upon them that ranged from awe to zest. The speech/story captured the attention of the writer's eleventh grade English students in the same manner in which elementary school teachers report that their younger students are captivated during story reading time. The writer purposefully read the speech/story using special voice intonations and inflections. This, coupled with their seeming fascination with the oversized color pictures engaged them almost immediately. The primary message and meaning that most students constructed from the story amplified the universal theme of living life in harmony and in peace with

nature. Additionally, other meanings that the students extracted were the need for humans to love themselves and to understand the need and connectedness that all people must be willing to accept as part of nature; and finally that they must respect each other's right to exist and share those things which have been created for the wonderment, enjoyment, and respect of all living things.

Chief Seattle's speech had a provocative effect on the students. After the reader finished reading to the students, a quote was placed in the center of the chalkboard that remained for the rest of the school year which served as a reminder of how infinitely wise the elders were and how their (elders) wisdom must be used as bridges to carry them through the positives and negatives in life. The quote reads, "This we know: All things are connected like the blood that unites us. We did not weave the web of life, we are merely a strand in it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves" (1991, p.20).

This literary reading served as the spark needed to begin a fire. The writer used that pregnant moment to relate some historical information that surrounded this eventful speech by Chief Seattle. The history that was imparted at that moment included the fact that well over ninety per cent of them (the students) are directly linked by true blood lines to the Native Americans and/or Africans that co-existed in the United States during that time. The interest that was piqued by this revelation was as exciting to the writer as it appeared to be to the students.

The writer further capitalized on this moment to discuss the kinship and affinity the Africans and Native Americans shared during the time period of Seattle's speech.

The writer then explained how that same connectedness can and should be rediscovered and applied in their lives. It was explained to them how literature study can be used as a vehicle to gain insight and wisdom in dealing with life's circumstances.

The writer used that moment of captivity to "hook" them into looking forward to the school year with the understanding that reading literature such as the story/speech by

Chief Seattle would be only one of many literary works to be read and studied this year written by or about people who to a large degree reflect their character, experience, or image.

Unfortunately, this year may be one of the only years that these students will have a variety of opportunities to read, think, or write about cultural and gender diverse literature. This is a problem that many Latino and African American students face. The literature review presented several possible solutions for teachers willing to eradicate this problem.

Hale-Benson (1992) and Ramirez and Castaneda (1974) believe the most basic way for teachers to solve the problem is for them to demonstrate through daily modeling a genuine respect for other cultures. Demonstrating this respect may be as simple as recognizing the simple nuances in a child's manner of speaking, dressing, or acting. These researchers recognize that these three areas, without proper understanding or recognition by teachers, could possibly cause a teacher to negate strong cultural patterns of behavior. Caution is given here by Hale-Benson to be wary of erroneously assuming that all Latino and African American students should be grouped in the same general categories. She cautions that for that mistake to happen, another problem will result. Degrees of generalities must be intelligently applied she posits.

To gain greater insight into solving the problem of being more culturally sensitive and aware, Ewing and Yong (1992) and Kuykendall (1992) suggest that teachers empower themselves with cultural-specific information that considers the students' learning style(s). Their research suggests that in the case of African American, Latino American, and Chinese American students of which they targeted, they found that different learning styles must be considered. Learning style insensitivity and ignorance combined with cultural insensitivity and ignorance could contribute to a student's failure or low achievement in school.

Teaching strategies that complement a student's learning style may include inclusion of opportunities to read culturally diverse literature. Kuykendall suggests that teachers should approach Latino and African American students' learning styles in light of the research (Hilliard and Kuykendall) that affirms that these students are more people-oriented, relational, and field-dependent/sensitive rather than linear which is the learning style in most school structures. She says people-oriented learning is a learning style rooted in African heritage. By contrast, she notes that White students tend to favor learning styles and settings that take place through the utilization of listening stations, technology hardware and programmed instruction and other objects. African and Latino American students benefit greatly from teachers who extend nonverbal support, rapport, intensive personal interaction and affection. As far as being "field dependent", she explains this as a tendency to be aware of the social and personal relevance of the learning experiences that relates to their own experience. Small group activities where an exchange of ideas prevails is where these students tend to flourish. The drill and practice type teaching strategy contradicts the active learning that research shows these students need. For these activities, it is suggested that course content relates to something in the students' own life experiences. She further suggests that these students be given praise, enthusiasm, hugs, and personal compliments as often as needed or appropriate.

More dialogue and validity should be given to the role of female writers and roles in literature posits Darder (1991), Thornton (1994), and Kirkland (1992). By doing so, they submit that the problem of few or no opportunities to read diverse literature by Latino and African American students may be stemmed. They attest that cultural and gender diversity are equally important in curricular designs.

Thornton asserts that in the research of "feminist scholars", whether they are female or male, they have charged that what is considered by most to be "scholarship" and "knowledge" for all persons have actually been based on the lived experiences of men. He

adds that the experience of women as analyzed by feminist scholars is largely relational. In other words, traditional notions of universality and objectivity are considered in reference to the relationship of subjects to the experiences of women. Kirkland's undertakings on the subject of gender equity in school curricula mirror those of Thornton and Darder. She sees the need for teachers to include literature that gives young women "strong, self-motivated, female leaders with whom to establish some identity". Darder essentially speaks of the need for educators to empower the learner to tell her own stories using her own voice rather than replicating the voice of the dominant culture and gender. This can be achieved after proper exposure to literature written by women who have developed their own voice she asserts.

In so doing, the traditional male-centered pedagogical practices that privilege hierarchy and authority will naturally be reduced. This purposeful bifurcation of female versus male domination and superiority approach to teaching Darder believes bodes well for the subjective and experiential knowledge of the female circumstance and is necessary and critical to the transformation of curriculum. Thornton, Kirkland, and Darder agree that teachers need inservice training programs to give them the expertise and confidence in gender inclusion of literature.

Description of Selected Solution

As a result of the suggested solutions derived from the literature, the writer employed the suggestions (as outlined) during the implementation time period of this major practicum. The writer employed the various solutions discussed in this practicum proposal with some modifications.

The writer's positive anxiety and excitement surely was a determining factor in the success of the outcomes. The writer was willing to first of all make sure that the learning and teaching environment was conducive to the achievement of the outcomes. An

atmosphere of love, care, academia and respect prevailed during the implementation time period.

Another solution implemented was the inclusion of historical accounts of contributions by Native Americans and Africans as they lived harmoniously in the early years of the U. S. Information such as this served to enhance the students' awareness of their elders and ultimately of themselves.

As suggested by Hale-Benson (1982) and Ramirez & Castaneda (1974), the writer recognized and praised cultural patterns of speech, dress and mannerisms that are rooted in the Latino and African American culture as observed daily and/or weekly in the classroom. Caution was exercised by the writer to not automatically assume that all the students could be grouped together as a class or in collaborative/cooperative groups in the same general categories by virtue of their race or culture alone. Differences in students were respected and celebrated.

The solutions presented by Ewing and Yong (1992) and Kuykendall (1992) assisted the writer in the implementation of the teaching styles that complement the students' learning style(s). Selected solutions included the writer learning more about the cultural foundation and attributes of the targeted students for the purpose of demonstrating and implementing more deep-rooted cultural awareness and cultural-specific information and allowances for stimulating, open dialogue and rapport-building exchanges with the intent of allaying the fears and apprehensions of the targeted students as they learned to accept social and cultural differences.

Rearrangement of students desks in circles, quads, or triads so that the students grew to accept others who may be different from them while developing the ability to work and share in harmony and peace were solutions the writer applied.

The writer utilized Darder (1991), Thornton (1994), and Kirkland's (1992) solution for providing more opportunities to the students to read by including literature

written by or about African Americans and Mexican/Latino authors as well as females who are "strong, self-motivated, female leaders with whom to establish some identity". The writer conscientiously presented strong-voiced literature written by and/or about women in an effort to give a balanced perspective between life as experienced by women in society compared to life as experienced by men in society. Because the majority of students in the target group are females, the writer believed this solution would be received enthusiastically especially by the female students.

Finally, the writer also decorated the classroom with live plants, posters, pictures, and quotes to stimulate the students thinking and reading about diversity in society.

In sum, this writer followed many of the selected solutions offered by the educational and psychological researchers presented in this practicum report while promoting the opportunities for students to read cultural and gender diverse literature.

Report of Action Taken

A summary of the actions taken in implementing the plans and solution strategies designed to accomplish the goals and expectations of the practicum follows:

MONTH ONE

Weeks 1 and 2

These two weeks were spent organizing and laying the foundation for the practicum implementation. Several non-teaching activities had to be accomplished during these two weeks before actual direct teaching (coaching) and full scale implementation could begin. The writer's room environment where the major implementation activities took place became the center of attention for this writer. The writer invested at least one hundred dollars to purchase live potted plants and potted flowers for the classroom to give the room a new atmosphere. Additionally, the bottom portion of the windows were covered with bright yellow construction paper to block out the excessive traffic of

students that pass by all day long and to brighten the room in general. The writer located printed positive, motivational messages and posters to display on the walls in the classroom as reinforcements for the positive thoughts and activities the writer expected to present to the students who would be involved in this practicum activity.

The desks were re-arranged in triads, quads, and circles to create a "closeness" between the students in the classroom.

Literature that was unavailable in the school's book room was ordered during the first two weeks of implementation. Most students expressed their desire to purchase one or more of the novels designated by the writer for inclusion in the practicum. The delivery dates were congruous to the writer's calendared plans. The following novels were ordered by the writer for the students:

The Scarlet Letter	- Nathaniel Hawthorne
Beloved	- Toni Morrison
The Invisible Man	- Ralph Ellison
Bless Me, Ultima	- Rudolfo Anaya
Like Water for Chocolate	- Laura Esquievel

These novels were selected by the writer for inclusion into the writer's curriculum because of their topical thematic development; character depth and similarity to the students; cultural similarity to that of the students (thirty-five students are Latino and twenty five are African American and one White student); and for the non-stereotypical female roles presented. Another significant reason these novels were chosen was because 4 of 5 were written by either Latino American or African American authors. Thus the novels offered a potentially diverse perspective of life that coincided with that of many students in the writer's targeted group.

It should be noted here that in developing the "Calendar Plan" for this practicum activity, the writer found it virtually impossible to condense the necessary strategies and

activities into a weekly time frame. Consequently, this writer chose a more workable solution by extending the activities to span a two-week time frame as opposed to a one week frame. It should also be mentioned that the original "Calendar Plan" included several guest speakers. However, because the writer had difficulty in getting approvals in a timely fashion from the administration, the writer chose to eliminate the inclusion of the guest speakers. The writer instead took the responsibility of sharing information with the students that would have been imparted by the guests. A variety of topical issues therefore, were presented to the students by this writer such as sexism in society and in literature; cultural inclusion and exclusion in schools and in literature; and how the author's voice and style in literature may be viewed as an indication of their experience and identity. Although confronting these issues and topics compounded the amount of energy and work for the writer, the challenge to the writer and appreciation by the students reciprocated for the additional work.

Weeks 3 and 4

During these two weeks, it was necessary for the writer to continue enhancing the room environment. All of the bulletin boards were changed to reflect cultural and gender diversity to augment the lessons that the writer would soon begin. Cutting out pictures of Latino and African American people and arranging posters and letters for bulletin board captions took several lunch periods and after school time. The writer purchased and displayed Native American and African American children's books that were used during the implementation time for multicultural development and inclusion.

During the fourth week the writer actually began introductory lessons on Hawthorne's Scarlet Letter. A historical perspective had to be given in order to engage the students into reading this American classic literature. The subjects of religion, Puritanism, societal persecution; judicial prosecution; women's roles during that era; and adultery were some of the areas of interest related to the novel that this writer had the

students to investigate in small and large discussion groups. (A weekly summary was entered in the writer's journal after each two-week period. This journal, written in a combination of list and sentence form was invaluable in reminding the writer of the expected and unexpected details and outcomes of this practicum.) The idea of working in cooperative/collaborative groups was not readily accepted by all students at this early point of implementation. Many of the students were observers instead of active participants.

MONTH TWO

Weeks 5 and 6

For the next two weeks the writer focused on lessons related to The Scarlet Letter. The subjects discussed over the past two weeks were expanded upon for more depth and clarity of students' construction of meaning. The writer spent time in the school and public libraries for supplemental materials and books to enhance the planned lessons.

The writer explained and demonstrated authentic assessment models to the students. Models from previous years were circulated in the classroom for students. In lieu of a teacher-made or commercially-made test over the novel after the students' completion of the reading, this writer allowed the students to design and develop a product (project). This product had to demonstrate and reflect their comprehension and ability to synthesize and apply the concepts(s) from the novel to their product to the best of their ability. Students were cautioned that their product would be judged according to the apparent effort (time) that it took to develop the product. Their ability to convince the writer during the oral presentation of their level of understanding was equally judged. It was very important for the writer to critically listen to the students during the oral presentations and take notes as needed so as to query the students about their product after the presentation. This behavior by the writer was modeled so that students could see the type and level of questioning that was expected.

Weeks 7 and 8

All authentic assessment models were turned in by students during the seventh week of implementation. The products ranged from one-act plays on video tape to collages and mobiles. The display of student work vibrantly added to the atmosphere that the writer attempted to create during the first three weeks of this practicum activity. As expected, the pride that the students exhibited in presenting and displaying their work had not been matched before implementation.

This week a new unit on literary style analysis was begun. Some of the literary style key words were introduced by the writer. Tone, diction, point of view, and syntax were terms the students had to understand and identify when applied by authors in their literature. Figurative language, imagery, symbolism, irony, and sentence structure were reinforced or taught by the writer also. The students' ability to apply these literary elements in their speech and writing was factored into the students' future class assignments during the practicum activity.

The eighth week was spent expanding on the literary concepts from the previous week in addition to introducing the new novel Beloved by Toni Morrison. Students were assigned to do research on various subjects such as on the author, the U.S. Enslavement Period; the Fugitive Slave Laws; and the attitudes of Northerners vs. the Southerners during the years in which the novel spanned. Students were asked to bring in pictures from books of Enslaved Africans (slaves), hardware used during the time period for torture/punishment (The writer brought in pictures for sharing too.), narratives from Frederick Douglass and others. An ironic twist of fate happened at this point in the implementation. News of a mother who had drowned her two sons by pushing them in a river while they were entrapped in her vehicle was the top national news story for several weeks. This chilling news story brought glaring light to the reality of infanticide as a result of extremely distressed of mothers. Although the main character, Sethe, in the novel

Beloved committed an act of infanticide to protect and save her child from a life of brutal, tortuous enslavement as opposed to killing because of a possible failed love relationship between the mother and her boyfriend, the crime, nevertheless was the same most students agreed. The writer capitalized on this real life event to broach discussions about the novel's themes of infanticide, family love, women in love and so on.

The writer noticed that the students interacted with each other more freely now than in the first month of school. The sensitive nature of the topics presented in class coupled with the students' latent cooperative spirit were necessary ingredients that developed over the next months.

MONTH THREE

Weeks 9 and 10

The students brought in related news articles such as the aforementioned crime over the next two weeks. Some students shared articles written in Spanish from Mexican newspapers of similar stories and stories about people holding women and children as slaves in parts of Mexico and the United States.

The writer took great pains to stay focused on the objectives of the lessons. It was exhilarating to see students self-motivated and engaged in their learning.

The writer administered a teacher-made test at the culmination of the Beloved lessons during the tenth week of implementation.

Weeks 11 and 12

Although the students completed their reading and test on Beloved, many of them wanted to continue lessons and discussions relative to their reading. The writer interpreted this as an indication and confirmation of what the researchers who were cited earlier in this practicum had said. Students are more motivated to read and embrace school when they feel a cultural connection to the curriculum and instruction (Kuykendall et. al)

Even though the writer moved on during the eleventh week to the new novel, The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck, the lessons during the next weeks always made connections to previous novels studied. The concepts of cultural and gender diversity, for example, were introduced and explored during these weeks using Morrison's Beloved for extrapolations into Steinbeck's Grapes ... .

The writer continued with further strategies to pique the students reading interest by assigning research on John Steinbeck, The Dust Bowl in Oklahoma, and the Westward Migration. After students read the first three chapters of Grapes ... the writer assigned collaborative writing groups to contrast the writing style of Hawthorne, Morrison, and Steinbeck after demonstrating to the students using the overhead projector how to list examples of sentence variety and length; diction; imagery; and tone of the authors. Several days in class were allowed for the students to collaborate on this assignment. Students were assigned to complete their writing assignment using their discussion notes and ideas generated from the group work.

MONTH FOUR

Weeks 13 and 14

Read-Around-Groups (RAGS) were formed so students could exchange papers and read each group member's paper making a list of comments and corrections on a separate sheet of paper. These comments were attached to the paper(s) being judged. Students were given guidelines and a rubric to assist them with this task. The writer participated in two groups' activity. At the end of the period, papers were returned to the student for revisions. The final draft was turned in by the student two days after receiving the suggested revisions. The writing process steps were expected to be followed by each student. RAGS created an arena for the writing process to be followed which of course, improves the students' writing skills.

Weeks 15 and 16

The lessons and discussions continued with Grapes ... . To further engage the students "into and beyond" the reading, study questions designed by the writer or taken from the teacher's guide book were issued. Emphasis again was placed on literary style analysis as noted in Weeks 11 and 12 calendar entry. Hand-outs about Steinbeck's journalism and marine biologist careers were discussed one day during these two weeks to examine the inter-relatedness of Steinbeck's personal interest in writing the novel. The controversial subjects of religion and spirituality were discussed at length. The writer asked students to volunteer to sit on a panel to discuss the issues further. Much to the writer's surprise, the panel discussions generated enough interest that the discussion required three days instead of one day as planned. The writer offered an enrichment reading by R. W. Emerson entitled "The Over-Soul" to supplement the discussion. This essay expanded on the existentialist philosophy that Steinbeck includes in his novel, Grapes ... . Students who were not on the panel were responsible for note-taking and writing a one page reaction paper on the panel discussion. This was a non-graded assignment that was simply checked off in the writer's grade book upon completion by the students.

At this half way point into the practicum, the writer submitted a midway progress report to the practicum adviser. At that point, only one of the six expected outcomes had been met by the writer. This was not a matter of concern for the writer because the other five expected outcomes were beginning to come into fruition. It should be noted that at this midpoint (Week 16) there was evidence to support the fact that the students were positively engaged in the novel readings and their oral and written assessments (authentic models or tests) indicated the students were motivated by the literature, discussion, and research.

MONTH FIVE

Weeks 17 and 18

The female characters in Grapes ... were investigated more during these two weeks. The characters Ma Joad and Rose of Sharon in particular gave impetus to the character analysis investigations. Students were asked to identify characteristics of the two characters and then list them on their paper. Groups were formed again for collaborative purposes. Each group selected a group reporter to report their findings to the class. As always, the writer circulated among the groups and participated with the students. The same collaborative learning groups worked to complete the assigned study questions issued by the writer. These questions were primarily designed by the writer to assist students into further probings into the novel.

Weeks 19 and 20

Students were assigned to write a paper on sexism in literature. They were instructed by the writer to use their list of ideas from the week before to write the paper. Their study questions were also consulted in assisting the students with the writing assignment.

At the end of this two week period, the students had to complete and exchange the first draft of their paper in RAGS. Only two students out of sixty-one did not complete their writing assignment.

MONTH SIX

Weeks 21 and 22

RAGS were continued in preparation for the final draft of the sexism paper and the final draft was submitted. The majority of the students responded in their final draft that their attitude about female characters in literature was vastly different from their previous perception. The writer modeled the participatory behavior of that of an inquisitive student.

At the end of this two week period, students began reading another novel, The Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison. The concept of invisibility as revealed by Ellison in his novel had to be defined and exemplified by the writer. To assist students in understanding the concept, students were asked to list instances when they were completely ignored by other people or when they felt people were responding to them based on preconceived judgments. As Ellison suggests, these preconceived ideas are often formed as a result of stereotypical misinformation about groups or segments of populations.

Students were told to keep an informal journal of ideas that scanned their mind as they were reading the novel. The writer told them to pay particular attention to images that were evoked from their reading as they may serve as seeds to the authentic assessment model product that was to be designed at the end of the reading.

Weeks 23 and 24

Students shared experiences similar to the invisible man's during the next four weeks. These shared experiences greatly enhanced the literature study of the novel. Group and class discussions were seasoned by close readings of pre-selected passages from the novel. Students were assigned to write three "quick writes" each week during the study of the Invisible Man. These "quick writes" which essentially are written within a three to ten minute time period, provided an excellent strategy for students to read a passage and then quickly write a response to the excerpted passage. This to a large degree forced the students to critically read, think, and write about the literature.

Again, the roles of the women in the novel were explored during the discussions as lead-ins to a contrastive analysis of the women in Invisible Man compared to the role of women in the previous novels studied during the implementation. At this point of the implementation, the writer noted that many of the students knew how to formulate their own high level questions about the literature which allowed the writer more time to observe and record the obviously positive direction in which the writer envisioned this

practicum should go. The students were observed questioning each other about their interpretations of the literature.

MONTH SEVEN

Weeks 25 and 26

Expansion of existential philosophy as suggested or interpreted from Ellison's novel was necessary in order that the students would have more clarity about the reading. The writer gave each student a copy of R. W. Emerson's essay, "Self-Reliance" to examine the comparison of ideas between Ellison and Emerson. The concept of self-reliance intrigued the students as they read both pieces of literature. To clarify the self-reliance concept, the writer showed a video tape to the students that included a panel discussion on the subject.

Comprising the panel were teacher colleagues of the writer. The students reacted favorably to seeing some of their former teachers involved in an intellectual discussion expounding on the ideas presented in the essay by Emerson. Students expressed their new understanding and interpretation of some of the ideas in the essay. After seeing the video, many students expressed their desire to have either another panel discussion of their own or a class debate. The writer realized that this pregnant moment of students being self-directed and motivated indeed spoke to the success of the practicum. Panel and debate discussions require motivated participants who are willing to critically read, speak, think and in this case even write about the literature assigned. The writer afforded the students with the opportunity to perform all of those integrated skills.

Weeks 27 and 28

The writer spoke with the verifier of the practicum this week to appraise her of the on going success of the implementation. She (verifier) has been continuously supportive of the teaching and learning that transpires in this writer's classes. The writer arranged for the report and documentation (sample students' work) to be shared with her upon

completion of implementation and the final practicum report.

The students completed all discussions and writings on the Invisible Man this week. Many of them revealed that the novel and the essay by Emerson by far proved to be the most challenging this year. Many agreed that the supplementation provided by the video combined with their own panel discussion and small group/large group discussions were invaluable to their understanding.

As an assessment for this novel, the students were given the option of taking a written objective test or creating an authentic model (See Table 3). The choices were almost evenly divided between students desiring to take the test and students desiring to design and present a model.

The next week (28) the test was administered and the products were collected, presented, and displayed in the writer's classroom.

The students were introduced to the new novel, Bless Me, Ultima. As an introductory lesson, the writer asked the students to brainstorm ideas that came to mind about Mexican/Latino culture and the Catholic church. Over half of the students in this practicum are of Mexican/Latino descent. Within that population the majority of them are members of a Catholic church and speak Spanish as a primary language. The two facts were derived through oral interviews/discussions between the writer and the students at the beginning of the school year. Thus, the students who were of Latino descent were very aware of and willing to share information about their culture and church.

MONTH EIGHT

Weeks 29 and 30

Students were asked to characterize in writing Ultima, Maria Luna, the Marez sisters, the Trementina sisters, and Rosie -- all of which are characters in Bless Me, Ultima. These characterizations were used later during this unit in a paper on "Does Gender Impact Culture or Does Culture Impact Gender?"

Cultural rites of passages were investigated. African American students shared their experiences as related to maturing, the church, and community. Mexican/Latino students shared their experiences in the same categories. The lone white student expressed her experiences to the class too. As a whole, the students agreed that as many similarities existed between the cultures as did differences. These comparisons and contrasts were compiled on the overhead projector by the writer so that the students could see, hear, and recognize how they are more culturally similar than not. Most students appeared to be pleasantly surprised to discover this. The writer was successful in setting up the arena for this discovery to take place. Acceptance and respect for each other's differences is necessary after acceptance and respect of self. This point was reiterated weekly during implementation.

Study questions designed to examine and explain the novel's details were issued to students. After reading Bless Me for one and a half weeks, students were assigned collaborative learning groups to arrive at answers to the study questions. Students also read an essay entitled "The Censorship of Neglect" (Anaya, 1992). The writer's intent was to engage students in a different genre of literature written by the author they were currently studying while giving them an unwavering opinion about the importance of reading literature representing diverse cultures.

Many of the themes from the novel had previously been examined by the students when studying the novels during the weeks prior to this month. A new topic emerged however. Alcoholism as a drug and drug abuse in the African American/Latino communities opened healthy dialogues on this issue. Several of the characters in the novel are alcoholics. As a result of their alcoholism, other people were emotionally scarred or in two instances, characters were killed at the hands of an alcoholic. Students spoke with first-hand experience and knowledge in many cases of how a family member or neighbor

has been harmed by the usage of alcohol or other drugs. Students were assigned a mini-research paper on alcoholism in which they investigated and found statistics and facts that gave them greater depth into the subject.

The writer allowed the students to develop their own lessons for the duration of this unit. The students were eager to volunteer to lead class discussion, become group leaders, or complete further research on novel-related subjects. The writer guided the students to refine their questions or answers as the writer circulated around the classroom. The writer was pleased and comfortable in knowing that the students related to and supported each other's learning by offering assistance to each other. The writer observed that the competition by students for the right answer or to be the first to complete an assignment was not visible as it had been at the beginning of the school year. This was a great milestone because many of the students in the writer's class are considered "gifted" which in some ways unfortunately conditions competitiveness between the students. The cooperative spirit and willingness to assist each other and the writer attributes to the long term strategy used by the writer of cooperative learning groups and group work throughout the school year. Another factor that should be considered as to why the students work together harmoniously is because the home culture of the students is African American or Mexican/Latino culture. According to researchers Kunjufu (1988) and Kuykendall (1992) these students are rooted in a cooperative, not competitive home culture. Thus, their readjustment to a non-competitive structure was apparently welcomed by most students.

Developing their own test presented another challenge for the students. They were instructed to develop a fifty question objective test within their group. The test, along with their answers, included a combination of multiple choice, true or false, matching, quotation identification, fill-in, and vocabulary expansion. The writer was impressed by the high level of questions and answers that were developed by the students. The

qualitative nature of the tests and answers served as an effective measurement of the students' reading comprehension, synthesis, and application of concepts and ideas from the literature study.

Week 30 included the completion of the test design as well as the issuance of the new novel to be read, Catcher in the Rye by J. D. Salinger. The themes of death, sex, maturity, mental illness, and alcoholism were the primary themes introduced to students. Since alcoholism was a key theme discussed and researched during the reading of Bless Me, Ultima, the writer chose to begin the introductory lessons by taking statistics and facts about alcoholism from their research reports and making transparencies for usage on the overhead projector. Students were in awe at some of the facts presented.

The writer introduced the main character, Holden Caulfield, to them by orally reading to the students the first chapter of the novel. The pin-drop silence that was heard as the writer read was captivating. The writer made appropriate voice inflections and intonations to enable the students to see and hear the character as the author may have intended.

Because the book length and style is simple, this was the only novel that the students took less than a month to read.

Weeks 31 and 32

For the first time during this writer's implementation, the students were allowed to read the Catcher ... novel while in class to supplement their reading time at home. The writer made this decision to make sure the students had enough time to complete their reading in the two week time span. Before each of the class periods began, the writer gave a brief overview of the chapters assigned the previous night. Using this method was not the most ideal method, however, the writer wanted to make sure time did not expire before the students finished reading.

The last three days of this two-week period were spent in large discussion groups. As stated in the previous week's entry, the students appear to have more confidence and motivation at this point to participate in class discussion with the writer acting as a coach or facilitator. The students completed this unit of reading without problems. The writer administered an objective test at the culmination of the reading.

MONTH NINE.

Weeks 33 and 34

With only four weeks before the practicum implementation ended, the writer realized that for juniors in high school, the students had overcome some serious hurdles in trying to experience the literature in less than two semesters. The students, although slightly weary, began reading the last scheduled novel, Like Water for Chocolate by Laura Esquievel.

Once the students began reading the novel, the weariness that many had expressed, became almost non-existent. They were anxious to talk about the characters and themes in the book. Male and female relationships, cultural and family traditions, recipes and food as extension of culture and its impact on psychological mood and temperament were some of the subjects the students excitedly discussed.

The writer assigned groups of students to explore these subjects while in collaborative learning groups. The writer allotted two class periods for the groups to discuss their subject in preparation for class discussion when a class period was given to discuss the subject. The students were assigned to develop a complete study guide for the novel. The guides were developed as a group project and as a final authentic assessment model in lieu of a final test. Each group was required to do the following:

- Read an actual critique of the novel and develop an original one in 3 - 5 pages
- Develop a 50 question objective test and answers (Include multiple choice; true

or false; quotation identification; matching; fill-in the blank; and vocabulary expansion

- List all major and significant minor characters analyzing each
- List, define, and exemplify 20 examples of literary elements employed in the novel
- 2 - 3 page biographical of author
- 30 - 40 vocabulary word list that includes uncommon and/or problematic words from novel
- 20 examples from the novel of figurative language
- 20 discussion questions/answers
- 50 study questions/answers
- List 5 enrichment product activities (usually referred to extra credit projects). Students did not have to actually complete but one of the five products

The students needed four days to collaborate in their groups on this major project. The entire project had to be typed or word processed and placed in a new folder. Each section required tab section dividers or graphically designed section divisions, a table of contents, an acknowledgments page and a title page. Examples of projects completed by the writer's previous students were circulated among the students.

Each of the final days of the practicum were filled with a multiplicity of activities from group or class discussions, group presentations, and group work on the projects. The writer set time aside from the activities to cite examples from the novel on family tradition; language, love and family relationships; food as cultural indicators; the role of women in Like Water ..., and folk healers (medicine men/women or curanderas).

During the last week of the practicum, the students' final paper was developed on their response (opinion) about the opportunities they have had this year to critically read, think, and write about cultural and gender diverse literature. The "Exit Reading Assessment Questionnaire" (See Appendix B) was also administered to the students. The

responses from the students were used in this problem-solving activity to assess the expected outcomes. During this last week, the writer's practicum verifier was contacted to apprise her that the practicum implementation was successfully completed. Both the verifier and the writer agree that arrangements for a time and place for the dissemination of the report results will be forthcoming.

The writer took time following the implementation to assess the program outlined in the "Report of Action Taken". The results of the questionnaire administered by the writer (Appendix B) were discussed with the students. The full discussion of the results are presented in Chapter V of this practicum.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Although the student population at this writer's high school work site includes approximately eighty-five percent Mexican/Latino students and approximately fifteen percent African American students, many of these students have not had wide-spread opportunities to critically read, think, and write about cultural and gender diverse literature.

Upon close examination of the results of a questionnaire that the writer administered to students during the first month of school, it was revealed that the majority of the students during their last two years of high school had little or no opportunities to critically read, think, and write about literature written by or about Mexican/Latino American or African American authors. To add to this absurdity, the questionnaire revealed that eventhough the majority of the students are female, the students (whether female or male) have had little or no opportunities to critically read, think, and write about literary works written by or about females.

A thorough literature review by the writer revealed strategies for teachers and administrators that affirm, accept, and motivate African American and Latino students so that they feel empowered to achieve success in school and life. The strategies that were implemented consciously, effectively, and immediately by the writer to help foster the students' success included providing a safe, trusting, nurturing, academic, fun environment conducive for teaching and learning; decorating the classroom with live plants and flowers and displaying positive messages on posters, pictures, and walls to stimulate student comfort and learning; rearranging the teacher's and students' desks in circles, triads, and quads to move students in closer proximity to each other; celebrating cultural diversity by appropriately praising students' first language speech patterns, appropriately praising their

style of dressing that indicated cultural connections; noting and praising behaviors that are rooted in Latino and African American family (home) culture; infusing literary works by or about females, African Americans, Latino Americans, Native Americans; and finally employing teaching styles that are complementary to the students' learning style(s).

Results

The six expected outcomes have been met to the extreme satisfaction of this writer. The expected outcomes were as follows:

Outcome One - 31 of 61 students in the target group will report on a questionnaire that they enjoy reading.

Outcome Two - 31 of 61 students will report on a questionnaire that they have read more than one literary work that included non-stereotypical African American, Latino, or female characters.

Outcome Three - 31 of 61 students will report on a questionnaire that they have appreciation or respect for another culture or race as a result of the literature studied this year.

Outcome Four - 31 of 61 students will report on a questionnaire that they have appreciation or respect for literature written by Latino, African American, or female authors.

Outcome Five - 31 of 61 students will report on a questionnaire that they identified with characters and/or the character's circumstances in the literature that were similar to their own.

Outcome Six - 55 of 61 students will develop an authentic assessment model project to display or present in the classroom.

It should be noted here that the number "61" in each expected outcome represents the total number of students enrolled in the writer's classes and the total number that were in attendance on the day the "Entrance Reading Assessment Questionnaire" (See Table 4 for results) was administered at the beginning of this practicum.

Table 4 Before Implementation

Results of the "Entrance Reading Assessment Questionnaire" (See pg. 60)
The number 61 represents the total number of students enrolled in the writer's classes.

Questions	1 Never Agree	2 Slightly Agree	3 Agree	4 Usually Agree	5 Strongly Agree
1.	24	36	1	0	0
2.	0	4	4	21	32
3.	36	20	2	2	2
4.	38	9	10	2	2
5.	35	21	2	2	1
6.	36	15	10	0	0
7.	40	12	9	0	0
8.	27	20	4	9	1
9.	27	15	2	9	8
10.	27	14	3	8	9
11.	43	11	7	0	0
12.	40	12	9	0	0
13.	45	10	6	0	0
14.	0	0	4	12	45
15.	4	5	6	15	30

The number "51" in each result below represents the total number of students out of "61" that were in attendance on the day the "Exit Reading Assessment Questionnaire" was administered at the end of this practicum. (See Table 5 for results)

Outcome One was met as evidenced by 40 of 51 students who agree or strongly agree that they enjoy reading. This is an impressive result since at the beginning of the implementation, 36 of 61 students responded they hate reading literature. This data supports the research that by engaging students in an inclusive curriculum and by employing teaching styles that are congruous to the students' learning style(s) students will be more motivated to read and achieve success.

Outcome Two was met as evidenced by 39 of 51 students who agree or strongly agree that they have read more than one literary work that included non-stereotypical African American, Latino, or female characters. The students have had more than three literary works that included non-stereotypical African American, Latino, or female characters. The focus on identifying and exposing examples of sexism and racism in literature and through their shared experiences can perhaps be attributed as the primary reason students recognized the non-stereotypical characters.

Outcome Three was met as evidenced by 47 of 51 students who agree or strongly agree that they have appreciation or respect for another culture or race as a result of the literature studied this year. The consistent infusion of cultural and gender diverse literary works is no doubt the basis for the overwhelming majority of the students expressing their new-found appreciation or respect for another culture or race. The effective change in not only what the writer taught but also how the writer taught must be factored in to the students' responses.

Outcome Four was met as evidenced by 43 of 51 students who agree or strongly agree that they have appreciation or respect for literature written by and about African American, Latino, or female authors. For much of the same explanation in Outcome

Three, the result of the writer's positive attitude towards the students, the literature, and life combined with the purposeful differentiation in the curriculum are factors that the students expressed to the writer that coincide with their respect or appreciation for literature authored by African Americans, Latinos, and females studied this year. Most students, in fact, reiterated many times their disappointment that they had little or no prior readings of cultural and/or gender diverse authors until this year.

Outcome Five was met as evidenced by 38 of 51 students who agree or strongly agree that they identified with characters and/or the character's circumstances in the literature that were similar to their own. The themes, characters, and often circumstances presented in the literature studied allowed students to relate to the dynamics of the plot development as related to their life's circumstances. The writer, who actively participated in group and class discussions, observed the positive interaction between the students even when they strongly disagreed with each other. Reading literary works that in many respects mirrored their own experience helped them to construct their own meaning from the literary pieces which will have positive benefits to their problem-solving skills and their ability to deal with life's experiences in their real world.

Outcome Six was met as evidenced by 61 of 61 students who developed, presented, and/or displayed an authentic assessment model project in the classroom. (This last outcome was not part of the questionnaire. Thus, the assessments by the writer were completed days prior to the questionnaire being administered.) All the students developed anywhere from one to five authentic assessment models based on their reading. The writer recognized that the quality of time and effort as well as indications that higher order thinking skills were used to develop the project was a highly effective means of monitoring mastery of skills and comprehension of concepts in most instances. Although there is still a need for conventional methods of assessing student comprehension, synthesis, and application of ideas and concepts from the literary works, that need was not weighted

heavily during this practicum implementation.

Table 5 After Implementation

Results of the "Exit Reading Assessment Questionnaire" (See pg. 63)
The number 61 represents the total number of students enrolled in the writer's classes.

Questions	1 Never Agree	2 Slightly Agree	3 Agree	4 Usually Agree	5 Strongly Agree
1.	0	6	16	14	15
2.	33	2	8	3	6
3.	2	10	10	14	15
4.	7	0	21	11	12
5.	7	15	19	2	8
6.	1	9	9	15	16
7.	5	13	16	11	6
8.	0	0	6	7	38
9.	0	0	6	4	41
10.	0	0	13	7	31
11.	0	3	8	9	31
12.	1	4	8	9	29
13.	1	7	11	11	21
14.	34	12	1	3	1
15.	2	3	9	6	31

Discussion

The implementation of the solution strategy and calendar plan outlined brought about an array of noteworthy results not apparent in the outcome data.

The writer made it a primary focus to assuage students' fear of successfully learning in a trusting, loving, nurturing environment. Many students have experienced teachers who start the school year off by telling the students to trust them and their classmates and then three to six weeks into the semester, a communication break down surfaces. This oftentimes causes both the teacher and the student to distrust each other which of course causes the teacher and the student to perform at levels lower than initially expected. Thus, ongoing activities that build trust between the student and teacher are of paramount importance. The lessons in these activities must remain as an iron commitment on the part of the teacher, who must be willing to function as a coach/consultant/ facilitator/change agent (all of which should be viewed as synonymous terms) in the classroom.

After decorating and preparing the classroom for a new direction of teaching and learning to transpire, the thought of relinquishing control of the students in the conventional sense at first generated some insecurities on the part of the writer. As a teacher trained or conditioned during the early seventies when the perceived role of the teacher was to stand firm and tall at the front of the classroom and wield an "iron whip," adjusting to an "equal-to-student" position required confidence and competence on the part of the writer. It was crystal clear what a difficult transitional period it would be for the writer and the students who have also been conditioned by teachers and parents that the teacher is the omnipotent authority in schools. This new approach to teaching in many respects created a paradoxical freedom -- imprisoned feeling. In one sense this writer felt freer than ever to try new approaches to teaching and learning. Simultaneously occurring

was the feeling that the more freedom exerted, the more constrained this writer may become if parents and/or administrators began to question and even insist that the old teaching methods be utilized. The writer was ecstatic that no problems were encountered from parents, students, or administrators.

As the implementation jetted into its mid point, it became apparent that most students were arriving in class with smiles, laughter, and inter-action that the writer believed was the result of the affinity the students were developing for each other. One courtesy the writer always made sure to say at the beginning of each day was a simple heartfelt "Good morning (or afternoon), class!" This may seem ordinary and simplistic, however many students reported that most teachers at the high school level do not say hello or good-bye to them. Therefore, the students knew to expect a beginning "Hello" and an ending "You are dismissed" or "Good Bye" to our day based on this discussion we had at the onset of the school year. The writer used that discussion to inject how quite often students view teachers as the enemy and therefore a wall separates teachers from students immediately. The writer went on to explain how this discussion could be viewed as an opening to the closeness that this writer envisioned would take place during the year. Conversations such as this that dealt with a multiplicity of subjects related or unrelated to the readings were not uncommon in the writer's class. In fact, this writer at times felt that the students expected these "little chats" as much as the television viewing audience expects to hear the monologue by the celebrity host at the beginning of a talk show! The writer has accepted the reality that even in teaching, there must be a proper balance of everything. Excessive regimented teaching is as ineffective as excessive getting-to-know-you activities.

It must be understood that a calendar plan of some sort must be followed when undertaking high-level, rigorous teaching/learning activities such as those outlined for this practicum.

Although the activities focus on critically reading, thinking, and writing assignments that are generally given to college preparatory-tracked students, the methods, materials, and expectations of this writer and of all teachers should be structured so that every student may benefit no matter which ability or post-graduation group the student has joined or has been placed.

The tracking system used at the writer's school fortunately for students in this writer's class was seriously flawed. Consequently, the students are heterogeneously grouped ranging from those who have been identified and tested as gifted to students who plan to "get a job" anywhere they can after graduation. This writer can honestly say that never were the expectations of quality assignments or activities compromised to accommodate students who were not labeled "college bound" or "gifted". This writer considered the fact that many African American and Latino students are not considered academic or gifted students by the people who have the power and authority to place them in rigorous academic classes such as the writer's honor's English class. The people in power, namely teachers or counselors, often overlook the academic and personal potential or depth of these students often because of the students' cultural or linguistic differences (Kuykendall, Hale-Benson, Hilliard, Kunjufu). Students in this writer's class experienced a culturally rich and language rich classroom that fostered their success.

The collaborative learning groups must also be factored into the success picture of this practicum. The integrated skills of writing, speaking, listening, and reading are enhanced as students are allowed to problem-solve and construct meanings in a group setting. The writer made a major mistake initially when the semester began however. Roles were not assigned for the first two group meetings. This almost proved to be disastrous. Many students, it appeared, chose to passively sit back and allow one or two people to dominate the group activity. As a consequence, little or no assignments or activities were completed. The writer then implemented a "job description" work sheet

that defined the job roles expected from each member of all groups. The group jobs were that of facilitator, recorder, reporter(s), and organizer(s). It was equally important that the writer actively participated either with a group or at the designated place in the classroom where the students had easy access to the coach (writer). The students knew that if this writer was not involved with a particular group, they could use that time to have personal share time with the writer. By the end of implementation, groups asked the writer to participate with their particular group. This, of course, was an added benefit to operating a class with a nurturing, fair, firm hand. The students benefited also, they said, from the probing questions and insight this writer shared. Admitting to the students that an answer was nebulous to the writer added to the students trust level. This practicum clearly demonstrated to the writer that teachers should not feel compelled to have all of the right answers. Students should see how a thought or problem is solved by the teacher who actually goes through the thinking process with them. In fact, whatever skills a teacher wants students to learn should be modeled by the teacher.

Reading to the students was also part of the successful outcomes. On the high school level, most teachers erroneously believe that the students are "too mature" to have stories read to them by the teacher. In line with this thinking is the faulty thinking that the classrooms do not need to be decorated at the high school level because students are "too mature". This writer used reading and decorating as tools to augment student achievement. Ignoring that fallacious opinion, the writer read a children's story to the class during the first week of school. At one point in the reading, this writer was so disturbed by the silence that the reading was stopped by the writer to make sure they were still alive! That captivating moment sent a resounding message to the writer that students in high school try very hard to convince themselves and others of their maturity. However, the reality is that they still have many of the same instructional needs and desires

as younger children. All of the children's books the writer read and displayed promoted a theme from the students reading.

As far as decorating classrooms in high schools, again, high school students require stimulation of as many of the five senses as possible as is true with elementary students. Secondary teachers must recognize and respect the adolescent's developmental stages by incorporating methods and materials that are applicable to the high schooler's developmental stage. The children's books, by the way, became part of the decor in the classroom. Their colorful displays served dual purposes in the classroom.

The writer, who is a mentor teacher, frequently held meetings or assisted other teachers in the classroom during lunch or after school. The writer's room stimulated many teachers' thinking and senses as it did the students. Some of the teachers asked the writer to assist them in modifying or enhancing their room environment. The writer always used those moments to briefly (non-condescendingly) explain that the room environment, physically and psychologically should enhance the students learning. Every poster, picture, word, or object, this writer explained, must be a reinforcement of an idea or concept taught or of a value to be learned.

Finally, it must not be underestimated that the time, energy, and effort the writer was required to inject into this problem-solving activity was enormous. There is a direct correlation between the amount of work this writer put into this practicum to achieve success and the amount of work (learning) the students were expected to produce. The students demonstrated their respect for this writer's arduous work with their arduous work effort that achieved outcome success. Their responses on the "Exit Reading Assessment Questionnaire" (Appendix B) and their "Year End Essay Questions" (Appendix C) speak to this fact. The writer's calendar plan served as the road map to the success in achieving

the expected outcomes. The strategies and other related activities coupled with the writer's high expectations were the vehicle that carried the students and the writer over the hills and valleys to success.

Recommendations

Several recommendations seem appropriate at this time for those with interest in employing any strategies from this practicum. Develop and follow a calendar plan that includes the major and minor methods, materials, and activities that will be presented during the practicum while setting long and short goals to augment success.

Second, seek money for the students' novels from the department chair, principal, or school board members. The writer felt very badly that the students and parents spent approximately eighty dollars this year on student novels. Some of the families could not afford this cost so the writer quite often paid for the students' novels.

Third, provide a list and very brief biographical sketch of guest speakers, their subject, and the dates to the appropriate person(s). The writer made the mistake of waiting for the principal to sign an approval form for the first scheduled guest. The approval form was signed and returned four days after the scheduled guest date.

Fourth, establish a trusting, supportive room environment that is student-centered and learner driven. Time for "Getting-to-Know You" activities must be given during the first two weeks of school to help assuage students conditioned distrust of their peers and the teacher.

Fifth, develop or rekindle the love of self, students, learning, and literature.

Sixth, provide a culturally rich and language rich room environment with bold colors and positive statements that promote values, reinforce the learning program, and that promote the fact that the students can and must strive for success in school and in life.

Seventh, buy, display, and read to the students illustrated children's stories that support the concepts and values being studied. Also read passages from the novels to students as often as possible.

Eighth, celebrate cultural, linguistic, and gender diversity.

Ninth, provide literature that includes work written by and about African Americans, Latinos, and female authors. These works should help students realize their connectedness to each other and to the world.

Tenth, teach the skills and structure of cooperative/collaborative learning activity groups. The structure should engage students in a variety of job roles such s facilitator, recorder, reporter(s), and organizer(s).

Eleventh, employ teaching styles that complement the cultural learning styles of the students. This requires educators to learn as much about the students' culture and cultural patterns as possible from students, parents, and books and tapes by educational researchers.

Finally, model the reading, writing, thinking, speaking and listening behaviors that support students in their quest to be successful in school and in life. They should be able to recognize from the modeling that teachers do not have all of the answers and there are processes that must be developed for these integrated skills to develop.

Dissemination

The district's curriculum services director has invited the writer to present the practicum during the new school year at one of the upcoming mentor and/or GATE teacher's meetings. In addition, the writer will offer a workshop to teachers on site and at the next national convention of National Association of Black School Educators of which the writer is an affiliate.

The writer expects to use the information gained in the practicum to develop the idea of providing more culturally rich and language rich curriculum to the district's secondary language arts and social studies teachers in particular.

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APPENDIX A

ENTRANCE READING ASSESSMENT
QUESTIONNAIRE

ENTRANCE READING ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire will not be used for grading purposes. It will be used to assess the interest and experience you have had during the last two years while enrolled in English classes.

Please respond to each question as honestly as possible by circling the number of your answer choice. Use the following Number Explanations:

1=never agree (**NO**), 2=slightly agree, 3=agree,
4=usually agree, 5=strongly agree (**YES**)

1. The literature read in my last two English classes positively challenged me.

   1 2 3 4 5

2. One book or less was read by me over the past two years.

   1 2 3 4 5

3. The literature had characters that are similar to my own character or others I know.

   1 2 3 4 5

4. The literature read included major female characters that were not stereotypical.

   1 2 3 4 5

   (Sterotypes in society and literature were discussed for two days in class prior to the administration of this questionnaire.)

5. The literature read included minor female characters that were not stereotypical.

   1 2 3 4 5

6. At least one literary work helped you appreciate or respect females more than before.

   1 2 3 4 5

7. The literature had circumstances and situations similar to my own or others that I know.

1 2 3 4 5

8. At least one literary work over the past two years was written by a Latino or African American.

1 2 3 4 5

9. At least one literary work had a major character that was Latino or African American.

1 2 3 4 5

10. At least one literary work had a minor character that was Latino or African American.

1 2 3 4 5

11. At least one literary work helped you appreciate or respect another culture.

1 2 3 4 5

12. At least one literary work helped you appreciate or respect another race of people.

1 2 3 4 5

13. Do you enjoy reading literature?

1 2 3 4 5

14. Do you dislike or hate reading literature

1 2 3 4 5

15. The literature presented would have been appreciated more if it had included more literature by and about Latinos, African Americans, and females.

1 2 3 4 5

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HONESTY!

APPENDIX B

EXIT READING ASSESSMENT
QUESTIONNAIRE

EXIT READING ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire will not be used for grading purposes. It will be used to assess the interest and experience you have had this year while enrolled in English.

Please respond to each question as honestly as possible by circling the number of your answer choice. Use the following Number Explanations:

1=never agree (**NO**); 2=slightly agree; 3=agree;
4=usually agree; 5=strongly agree (**YES**)

1. The literature read in my English class positively challenged me.

   1 2 3 4 5

2. One book or less was read by me over the past two years. (9th & 10th grade)

   1 2 3 4 5

3. The literature had characters that are similar to my own character or others I know.

   1 2 3 4 5

4. The literature read included major female characters that were not stereotypical.

   1 2 3 4 5

5. The literature read included minor female characters that were not stereotypical.

   1 2 3 4 5

6. At least one literary work helped you appreciate or respect females more than before.

   1 2 3 4 5

7. The literature had circumstances and situations similar to my own or others that I know.

   1 2 3 4 5

8. At least one literary work this year was written by a Latino or African American.

1 2 3 4 5

9. At least one literary work had a major character that was Latino or African American.

1 2 3 4 5

10. At least one literary work had a minor character that was Latino or African American.

1 2 3 4 5

11. At least one literary work helped you appreciate or respect another culture.

1 2 3 4 5

12. At least one literary work helped you appreciate or respect another race of people.

1 2 3 4 5

13. Do you enjoy reading literature?

1 2 3 4 5

14. Do you dislike or hate reading literature

1 2 3 4 5

15. The literature presented was appreciated more because it included literature by and about Latinos, African Americans, and females.

1 2 3 4 5

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HONESTY!

APPENDIX C

YEAR END ASSESSMENT ESSAY QUESTIONS

YEAR END ASSESSMENT ESSAY QUESTIONS

This year marks the first time many of you have had numerous oportunities to critically read, think, and write about literature written by or about African American, Latino, or non-stereotypical females.

Please use your own paper to answer the following essay questions using your own paper as honestly as possible.

1. What is your opinion about the opportunities you have had this year to read literature written by Latino authors?

2. What is your opinion about the literature studied this year that was written by or about African American authors?

3. What is your opinion about the literature studied this year that was written by or about female authors?

4. What is your opinion about the literature studied this year that contained strong, non-stereotypical female characters?